

Top Health Concerns Raised by Participants During Dec. 11 CHIP meeting

When asked by facilitators to identify their top health concerns in Lewis and Clark County, participants wrote the following, which facilitators and health department staff have grouped into broad categories. Participants were encouraged to list more than one concern.

1. Mental Health/Suicide (28 responses)

- a. Access to mental health services for families who don't qualify for Medicaid
- b. Youth suicide (5)
- c. Transition from youth to adult mental health services
- d. Psychiatric management
- e. Reduce stigma
- f. Co-occurring mental illness and developmental disability
- g. Maternal/perinatal mental health
- h. Lack of mental health services, professionals (4)
- i. Long wait for services if available at all (2)
- j. Can we implement a community suicide prevention program?
- k. Mental health especially for parents trying to raise kids

2. Non-Tobacco Substance Abuse/Chemical Dependency (20 responses)

- a. Prescription drug abuse (2)
- b. Youth substance abuse (2)
- c. Social drug use
- d. What's fueling the need for youth to experiment? Where's the supply? Why is it so accessible to youth?
- e. Treatment plan availability
- f. Culture that endorses alcohol and guns
- g. Driving under the influence of drugs/alcohol
- h. How do we educate about and reduce use of marijuana?
- i. Co-occurring mental illness and substance abuse
- j. Alcoholism
- k. THC use
- l. Detox facility

3. Physical Activity/Fitness (12 responses)

- a. Incorporate physical activity into workplaces
- b. Employer support for employee exercise
- c. Work sites that encourage exercise, assist or reimburse fitness facility dues
- d. Free indoor play space for children in winter
- e. Barriers to physical activity (sidewalks, bike paths, etc.)
- f. Low income need access to physical exercise programs
- g. Youth fitness
- h. Unhealthy lifestyles

4. Tobacco Use (11 responses)

- a. Indoor air quality
- b. Reduce use among children and adults
- c. Tobacco-related diseases
- d. Encourage legislature to spend adequate amount on smoking prevention
- e. Smoking in pregnancy
- f. Youth smoking

5. Nutrition/Hunger (11 responses)

- a. Allergies can affect whole body and can be hard to diagnose
- b. Youth nutrition
- c. Parents don't know how to feed their children healthy food or create healthy menus for their family
- d. Irritable bowel syndrome due to gluten and other allergies
- e. Feeding children and families on weekends or dinners on school days when they qualify for free/reduced meals
- f. Lack of healthy foods available/affordable
- g. Poverty and hunger in children
- h. Getting children to school on time to eat breakfast at school

6. Access/Provider Availability (10 responses)

- a. Real problem is roughly 20-25% of population that is near-poor. They are not eligible for much health care help until their health issues are crises.
- b. Lack of access for low-income individuals
- c. Uninsured or underinsured (2)
- d. Need for specialized medical care
- e. Lack of primary care (4)
- f. No pulmonologist

7. Maternal and Child Care (9 responses)

- a. Improve quality of life in first 3 years
- b. Quality, safe, affordable, reliable child development, non Nana's day care
- c. Youth access to contraception
- d. Youth sexual behavior; early onset and multiple partners
- e. Prematurity and low birth-weight due to lack of prenatal care
- f. Teen and single mother pregnancies
- g. Unintentional pregnancies
- h. Low birth-weight
- i. Sexually transmitted diseases

8. Chronic Disease Prevention (9 responses)

- a. Childhood onset of type 2 diabetes
- b. Heart disease
- c. Preventative illnesses
- d. Cancer (2)
- e. High blood pressure
- f. Diabetes
- g. Preventive health screening (2)

9. Violence/Abuse (9 responses)

- a. Gun-related homicides
- b. High number of domestic violence/rape incidents and related impact on medical and other service providers
- c. Parents fear allowing children to play outside
- d. Bullying (2)
- e. Unhealthy relationships
- f. Abuse of children, spouses, elders

10. Access/Transportation (7 responses)

- a. Limited public transportation, especially weekends and evenings (3)
- b. Especially for seniors and poor to make health care more available
- c. Taxi service for medical appointments outside city limits for Medicaid recipients

11. Transportation Safety (6 responses)

- a. Failure to yield to pedestrians
- b. Safety of cyclists on the streets
- c. Walking/biking safety and access (Complete Streets)

- d. Distracted drivers
- e. Speeding
- f. Make “healthy” more visible on Cedar and Custer (looks very different from walking mall)

12. Obesity/Overweight (6 responses)

- a. Childhood obesity

13. Immunizations (6 responses)

- a. Access
- b. Readily available information about risks/benefits of flu vaccine
- c. Low rate of childhood immunizations (2)
- d. Hep C, HIV

14. Dental Care (4 responses)

- a. Access for low income, uninsured and people on Medicaid (2)

15. Environmental Health (3 responses)

- a. Increased knowledge about home radon tests to decrease lung cancer
- b. Number of air quality concerns
- c. Clean air and water

16. Miscellaneous

- a. Poverty
- b. Community education
- c. Affordable, safe housing, especially for low-income (2)
- d. Healthy activities for youth to keep them engaged in school (2)
- e. Community events for ages 18-21
- f. Youth transitioning to adults